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May 15, 2020

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their May 15, 2020 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors, passed the following motion as recommended in attached report NRH 7-2020:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 2020 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Your assistance is requested in moving report NRH 7-2020 through proper channels to Regional Council.

Sincerely,

Councillor Walter Sendzik
Chair



Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2020) to Board of Directors

Recommendation:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 2020 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Submitted by:

A blue ink signature of Donna Woiceshyn, written in a cursive style.

Donna Woiceshyn
Chief Executive Officer

Approved by:

A black ink signature of Walter Sendzik, written in a cursive style.

Walter Sendzik
Chair

Directors:

Walter Sendzik, Chair
Regional Councillor
St. Catharines

Gary Zalepa, Treasurer
Regional Councillor
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Tom Insinna
Regional Councillor
Fort Erie

James Hyatt, Vice-Chair
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Ann Baker
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Lou Souter
Community Director
St. Catharines

Karen Blackley, Secretary
Community Director
Thorold

Barbara Butters
Regional Councillor
Port Colborne

Leanne Villella
Regional Councillor
Welland

HIGHLIGHTS:**Application Activity**

678 received & processed

**Work Orders**

2,575 issued

**Capital Program**

42 purchase orders issued
1 public tender closed
1 project ongoing

**Rent Arrears**

= \$71,135.25

or

5.46% of the monthly rent charges

**Community Resources & Partnerships**

offered supports to

327

new referrals



43

partners

Non-Profit Housing Programs

62% deemed HEALTHY

**Rent Supplement / Housing Allowance**

1,457 units

**Niagara Renovates**

- Inspections on hold due to COVID-19
- 8 homeowners approved for funding

Welcome Home Niagara

4 homeowners received assistance
1 was an NRH tenant

**Housing First Project**

13
Individuals / families housed

**Appeals**

= **11** 7 upheld
4 overturned

**New Development**

Hawkins/Dell

- Demolition complete
- Construction - spring 2020 but may be delayed due to COVID-19



***V**ISION*

That the Niagara community will provide affordable, accessible and quality housing for all residents

***M**ISSION*

To expand opportunities that make affordable housing an integral part of building healthy and sustainable communities in Niagara

As the administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) works to fulfill our vision and mission through six main areas of responsibility:

1. [Public Housing \(NRH Owned Units\)](#)
2. [Non-Profit Housing Programs](#)
3. [Rent Supplement Program](#)
4. [Affordable Housing Program](#)
5. [Service Manager Responsibilities](#)
6. [Housing Access Centre and Centralized Waiting List](#)



Definitions can be found in the attached Reference Sheet.

1. Public Housing (NRH Owned Units)

DAY-TO-DAY MAINTENANCE:

In Q1, **2,575 work orders** were issued, representing \$905,371.35. \$39,965.18 of this amount was charged back to tenants who were held responsible for damages.

	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1
# of work orders issued	2,500	3,084	3,111	3,675	2,575

CAPITAL PROGRAM:

The Capital Program is responsible for maintaining the Public Housing (NRH Owned Units) asset and planning for future sustainability.

In Q1, 42 purchase orders were issued, 1 public tender closed and purchase orders issued \$1,569,627.

The Capital Program was responsible for one capital project and 41 purchase orders valued at \$1,569,627:

- one project - replacement of balconies and railings
- 41 RFPs and RFQs - various investigations, health and safety repairs, structural repairs and pavement retrofits

As of March 31, 2020, \$ 1,569,627 of the \$11.7 budgeted (excluding emergency) has been committed and or actually spent (13.41%).

TENANT MOVE OUTS:

Move Outs By Reason

Health	3	NRH Transfer	14
Long Term Care Facility	12	Moved to Coop or Non-Profit	2
Deceased	12	Bought a House	1
Private Rental	4	Left Without Notice	1
Voluntarily Left Under Notice	1	Other/None Given	10
Eviction – Tribunal	2	Cease to Qualify	0
		TOTAL	62

In Q1, there were **62 move outs**. Two involved eviction orders granted under the Ontario Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) – Arrears (one), Disturbances N5 (one). One of the evictions was enforced by the Sherriff.

	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1
# of move outs	51	86	57	71	62

ARREARS:

NRH Housing Operations actively works to reduce rent arrears but saw an increase in 2020-Q1 due to COVID-19 and tenant job loss while they await provincial benefits.

	Mar 31, 2019	Jun 30, 2019	Sept 30, 2019	Dec 31, 2019	Mar 31, 2020
Rent charges for the month	\$1,203,317.00	\$1,257,090.00	\$1,267,460.00	\$1,286,793.00	\$1,302,721.00
Accumulated rent arrears	\$35,736.89	\$34,004.39	\$35,549.21	\$36,134.21	\$71,135.25
Arrears %	2.97%	2.71%	2.80%	2.81%	5.46%

INSURANCE:

In Q1, there were four property damage claims awaiting final costs with payout pending.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS:

In Q1, we had partnerships with **43 community agencies** across Niagara. As a result of these partnerships, more than 200 support and enrichment activities were offered to tenants at NRH sites. Each partnership contributes to tenant lives and, in turn, the success of the Public Housing community as a whole:

- NRH began working with local partners to bring the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program to eligible low-income seniors in NRH communities. Quest Health Centres, Centre De Sante and Bridges Health Centre facilitated presentations and applications for the program, which will provide dental benefits to seniors who do not have access through other government programs such as Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works (OW) or Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB).

Also during Q1, NRH Community Programs Coordinators (CPCs) offered support to **327 new referrals of tenants in need of assistance**. Of those new referrals, **59% were considered medium-high need**, (e.g. child safety concerns, eviction, social issues, cognitive concerns). In particular, there was an increase in the number of tenants needing help with supports and referrals to other agencies.

2. Non-Profit Housing Programs

As administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, NRH provides legislative oversight for **60 Non-Profit Housing Programs (non-profit and co-operative)**. Operational Reviews are conducted to determine the overall health of each.

	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1
Healthy	40	40	40	39	37
Routine Monitoring	18	17	17	18	21
Intensive Monitoring	0	1	1	1	0
Pre-PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	1
PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	60	60	60	60	60

NRH Housing Programs staff continue to work with Housing Providers as they move toward End of Operating Agreements (EOA) / End of Mortgage (EOM).

3. Rent Supplement Program

In Q1, there were **1,457 Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance units** across Niagara. In the Rent Supplement program, tenants pay 30% of their gross monthly income directly to the private landlord and NRH subsidizes the difference up to the market rent for the unit. The Housing Allowance program is a short-term program that provides a set allowance to help applicants on the wait list.

	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1
Fort Erie	26	32	32	30	32
Grimsby	34	26	24	22	18
Lincoln (Beamsville)	11	11	11	13	14
Niagara Falls	235	239	240	239	237
Niagara-on-the-Lake	4	5	5	5	5
Pelham	20	19	19	19	17
Port Colborne	67	62	65	64	67
St. Catharines	741	780	773	778	798
Thorold	57	61	56	57	61
Welland	209	203	200	198	192
West Lincoln	15	15	15	16	16
TOTAL	1,419	1,453	1,440	1,441	1,457

Variance in the Rent Supplement program are a reflection of fluctuation between agreements ending and new agreements taken up with landlords.

An **In-Situ Rent Supplement Program** has been developed to engage new landlords and offer applicants on the Centralized Waiting List an opportunity to receive Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance where they currently live. This removes the need for moving related expenses and broadens the network of landlords in business with NRH.

In Q1, NRH initiated new agreements with **nine new landlords**.

4. Affordable Housing Program

NIAGARA RENOVATES PROGRAM:

The Niagara Renovates program provides assistance to low-to-moderate income homeowners for home repairs, accessibility modifications and the creation of secondary suites in single family homes.

Niagara Renovates inspections for new applicants for the 2020-2021 funding cycle have been placed on hold due to COVID-19. Inspections of completed work are being verified by homeowner photographs and formal inspections will take place as soon as possible and will include all areas inside and outside of the home to ensure compliance with program guidelines. Issues will be identified and a detailed Inspection Report provided to the homeowner.

NRH received \$545,920 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) for all three streams of the program (Homeowner, Secondary Suite and Multi-Unit).

Eight homeowners have been approved for funding at this time and NRH is working toward re-opening these programs as we become more proficient at working under the COVID-19 rules.

HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM – “WELCOME HOME NIAGARA”:

The Homeownership program assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan.

NRH received \$200,000 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) program in September 2019 to be committed by March 2020.

In Q1, **four homeowners** received assistance through Welcome Home Niagara. **One of these was an NRH tenant.**

	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1
# of homeowners assisted	0	4	6	7	4

HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM:

The Housing First program helps people move quickly from homelessness to their own home by providing supports to help difficult to house individuals find and keep housing.

In Q1, **13 individuals/families** were housed through the Housing First program. Since 2012, Housing First has helped 451 individuals/families.

	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1
# of individuals/families housed	10	23	15	16	13
# of Housing First units (at quarter end)	189	198	197	202	199

17 of these Housing First units were created with NRH's new development at 527 Carlton Street in St. Catharines.

RENTAL HOUSING (NEW DEVELOPMENT):

NRH New Development

Hawkins Street/Dell Avenue, Niagara Falls		
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)	\$3,000,000	20
Regional Development Charges / NRH Reserves	\$17,090,000	53
TOTAL	\$20,090,000	73

Hawkins Street/Dell Avenue

- Demolition of 12 houses complete
- Updated Topographical Survey complete
- Pre-qualification Tender of General Contractors closed on February 20 – 16 submitted proposals, seven were pre-qualified, six are predicted to tender
- Class B Cost Report was completed and issued on March 2
- Development Committee Meeting held on March 12
- Drawings and specifications completed on March 16
- Permit Application submitted on March 24
- Site Plan Agreement approved then registered by the City of Niagara Falls on March 30
- Investigating receipt of building permit prior to April 4
- Construction Tender Package issued on March 16 and will close on April 21
- Nine addendums issued thus far
- Tender Committee Meeting to be determined and pending review, construction contract recommendation to the NRH board
- Construction scheduled to start in late May or early June but may be delayed due to COVID-19 and provincial restrictions

AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNIT #'S BY MUNICIPALITY:

Fort Erie		Grimsby		Lincoln (Beamsville)		Niagara Falls	
NRH Owned	116	NRH Owned	55	NRH Owned	61	NRH Owned	884
Housing Providers	389	Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	41	Housing Providers	828
Rent Supplement	31	Rent Supplement	22	Rent Supplement	12	Rent Supplement	239
New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	140
NOTL		Pelham		Port Colborne		St. Catharines	
NRH Owned	40	NRH Owned	0	NRH Owned	88	NRH Owned	1,017
Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	139	Housing Providers	1,666
Rent Supplement	5	Rent Supplement	19	Rent Supplement	64	Rent Supplement	775
New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	35	New Development	346
Thorold		Welland		West Lincoln (Smithville)		Region-wide	
NRH Owned	29	NRH Owned	394	NRH Owned	0	NRH Owned	2,684
Housing Providers	85	Housing Providers	425	Housing Providers	86	Housing Providers	3,659
Rent Supplement	57	Rent Supplement	194	Rent Supplement	15	Rent Supplement	1,433
New Development	46	New Development	167	New Development	0	New Development	734

* There are no affordable housing units in Wainfleet

December 31, 2019

5. Service Manager Responsibilities

APPEALS:

In Q1, **11 appeals** were heard (one more than in 2019-Q1). Three appeals had to be postponed in March due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- Four related to ongoing RGI eligibility for failure to provide information (one with illegal occupants) – one UPHELD, three OVERTURNED (two with conditions)
- Two related to review of rent charge – both UPHELD
- Five for Urgent Status decisions made by Housing Access – four UPHELD, one OVERTURNED

	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1
# of appeals	10	12	10	11	11

INVESTMENTS:

See Appendix A – Investment Report

6. Housing Access Centre & Centralized Waiting List

APPLICATION ACTIVITY:

# of Applications Received & Processed	678	# of Eligible Applications	656
# of Special Provincial Priority Status Applications	85	# of Ineligible Applications	22
# of Urgent Status Applications	103	# of Cancelled Applications	216
# of Homeless Status Applications	150	# of Applicants Housed	119

In Q1, **216 households were removed** from the Centralized Waiting List because they were no longer eligible, they found alternate housing or we were unable to make contact.

CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST:

2019- Q1	2019- Q2	2019- Q3	2019- Q4	2020- Q1
# of households				

A	Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) waiting list:					
	Niagara resident RGI waiting list	4,715	4,926	5,012	5,154	5,322
	Applicants from outside of Niagara	793	849	897	977	1,045
TOTAL RGI waiting list:		5,508	5,775	5,909	6,131	6,367

	Housing Allowance: a set allowance to help applicants on the waiting list with affordability in the private market until housed in an RGI unit	704	742	747	742	739
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A1	RGI waiting list demographics:					
	Seniors	2,257	2,344	2,362	2,455	2,514
	Adults no dependents	1,805	1,881	1,922	1,979	2,041
	Adults with dependents	1,446	1,550	1,625	1,697	1,812

A2	RGI list further segmented (#'s included in A & A1):					
	SPP – Special Provincial Priority (Ministry Priority): helps victims of violence separate permanently from their abuser	128	148	165	148	146
	URG – Urgent (Local Priority): for applicants with mobility barriers and/or extreme hardship where their current accommodation puts them at extreme risk and/or causes hardship	117	109	130	142	152
	HML – Homeless (Local Priority): provides increased opportunity for placement to homeless households	971	1,012	1,007	1,075	1145
	SUP – Supportive/Transitional: provides targeted, provisional services to assist individuals to transition beyond basic needs to more permanent housing	15	11	12	16	23

B	In addition, NRH manages:					
	Overhoused: households who are living in subsidized accommodation with more bedrooms than they are eligible for	180	176	181	174	176
	Transfer: households who are currently living in subsidized accommodation and have requested a transfer to another provider	564	573	603	613	635
TOTAL RGI households on waiting list managed by NRH:		6,252	6,524	6,693	6,918	7,178

C	NRH maintains a waiting list for market rent units (62 Non-Profit Housing Programs):					
	Market: applicants who have applied for a market rent unit in the Non-Profit Housing Programs portfolio	667	723	752	784	810

TOTAL households on waiting list managed by NRH:		6,919	7,274	7,445	7,702	7,988
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TOTAL individuals on waiting list managed by NRH:		11,884	12,577	13,059	13,587	14,197
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Note: the above chart includes only those who apply to the Centralized Waiting List and does not capture the full number of those in need of affordable housing in Niagara.

ESTIMATED WAIT TIMES:

CITY	SENIORS Age 55 and older		SINGLES Age 16-54		HOUSEHOLDS WITH DEPENDENTS			
	Bachelor	1 Bed	Bachelor	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed
	Y E A R S							
Fort Erie	-	10	3	10	2	2	5	-
Grimsby	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lincoln	-	4	-	9	10	9	-	-
Niagara Falls	5	6	-	17	8	3	11	15
Niagara-on-the-Lake	-	5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pelham	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Port Colborne	-	5	-	11	4	4	3	-
St. Catharines	-	6.5	9	13	3.5	4	10	11
Thorold	-	9	-	11	6	10	-	-
Welland	-	5.5	6	15	7	2.5	7	6
West Lincoln	-	4.5	-	-	7	5	-	-

- no units of this size available in this community

January 2019

Please note:

- wait time information can fluctuate and is an approximation only
- wait times may not reflect the actual time one may wait for affordable housing